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ORIG. OPR (Operations and

Policy Research)

(orig. under Boyce)

Article appeared
on page 489

11 November 1978

COVERT SCHOLARSHIP

THE MARKET
FOR POTTED
EXPERTISE

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A great deal can be said for the contract and grant system whereby agencies of the federal government draw upon the knowledge and skills of private groups, scholars and specialists. But all too often, mischievous consequences flow from symbiotic relationships that develop between contractors, grantees and the government. This danger has become acute since 1955, when Operations and Policy Research Incorporated (OPR) entered the picture.

The original stated aim of OPR was "to conduct and encourage basic and applied research, participate in educational activities, and advise on matters relevant to all phases of government and private policy formation and operation." What this meant was put more specifically when OPR, applying for tax-exemption as a nonprofit group, notified the Treasury Department that its purpose was "support of and actual conduct of research and educational programs in the social sciences and humanities, participation in government research projects." (During OPR's first few years it was denied tax-exemption status on the ground that it was engaged in commercial pursuits, but in 1959 the IRS decided it qualified for exemption as an educational/charitable group.)

OPR's stated aims concealed much more than they revealed. Instead of leaving it to the government to enlist the services of academicians in an aboveboard fashion, it provided the bureaucracy with an essentially covert mechanism whereby it could secure the fruits of tailored research and camouflaged publishing ventures by anonymous scholars. OPR, to put it bluntly, supplied the agencies with potted scholarship bought from campuses around the country and has had written and got published books which, directly or indirectly, were financed by the agencies whose ends they served.

In drumming up federal grants and contracts OPR has emphasized its access to "scholars and specialists in the social sciences and on foreign areas," its ability to "conduct a wide variety of studies which provide information and analysis for the development of policy and programs."

developing "programs designed to disseminate political knowledge and increase its application to public policy." For reasons of expediency—or possibly subterfuge—these services were rendered chiefly by four OPR subsidiaries: the Institute for the Comparative Study of Political Systems (George Demetriou, director); the Institute for Cross-Cultural Research (Theodore Stoddard, director); Independent Research Associates (William R. Hamilton, president); and Editorial Advisory Associates (Cornelius Vahle, director).

The Institute for the Comparative Study of Political Systems, an operation launched with a \$110,000 grant from a CIA conduit (the Andreas Foundation), produced research and monographs on "all phases of elections both in the United States and Latin America . . . [based on] investigation of voter behavior and . . . the political and legal contexts of elections." The Institute for Cross-Cultural Research, on the other hand, focused on "the changing cultures of ethnic groups throughout the world" because of the need "to promote better understanding of these people as they attempt to cope with new economic, political, religious and technical situations."

Over the years, roughly half of OPR's income came from USIA contracts involving book and other publication activities quietly carried out for the agency by Editorial Advisory Associates and Independent Research Associates. Some books were written to order for the agency and some were created jointly by USIA and OPR. "Planting" such books with commercial publishing houses was definitely one of OPR's most valued services.

The founding incorporators of OPR—who became its top officers—were two well-connected Washingtonians: Evron Kirkpatrick, executive director of the American Political Science Association, and Max Kampelman, a prominent lawyer and intimate of Sen. Hubert Humphrey. Kirkpatrick brought to OPR's presidency not only the experience he had acquired in ten years of employment in the federal intelligence community (initially as assistant director of research and intelligence in the Office of Strategic Services and later as deputy director of the State Department's Office of Intelligence Research) but also the benefit of his wide influence among political scientists. Kampelman, who had previously served as Senator Humphrey's top aide, had a knack for pulling political strings that he often put to useful account as OPR's vice president.

Thanks to Kirkpatrick's contacts and Kampelman's enterprise, OPR got off to a fair start. During its first year its income from government sources totaled \$38,665 (\$27,736 for "editorial advisory services," \$4,800 for "Congressional history account," and \$6,128 for "miscellaneous"). The next three years were much busier: between 1956 and 1959 OPR's combined income totaled \$279,169. (See box for some individual projects.)

Whether these or subsequent projects were undertaken for the CIA or USIA is fuzzy, but recently

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